

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A memory card comprising an erasable and programmable nonvolatile memory and a control circuit,

wherein a memory ~~array area~~ of ~~said the~~ nonvolatile memory includes a plurality of erasing blocks and is adapted to store an erasing table for storing a first flags each of which indicates indicating whether the memory area a datum stored in a corresponding erasing block is a vacant area valid or not in every erasing unit invalid,

wherein ~~said the~~ memory ~~array area~~ includes a plurality of memory cells that have a predetermined threshold voltage, and

wherein ~~said the~~ control circuit has pre-erasing control to ~~previously erase a predetermined memory area the datum stored in an erasing block corresponding to a the first flag which indicates that a datum is invalid, indicating the vacant area irrespective of an operation instruction from the outside for instructing an the address for changing the threshold voltage of a memory cell.~~

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2. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 1,

wherein ~~a~~ the erasing table further includes second flags each to indicate ~~indicating whether the memory area a~~ corresponding erasing block, for which the corresponding first flag indicates an invalid datum, is in the erase condition already erased or not ~~corresponding to said first flag, indicating whether the memory area is a vacant area or not, is also included, and~~

wherein ~~said the~~ control circuit ~~regards, in the pre-erasing control, the memory area indicated to be a vacant area by said first flag and indicated to be a not yet erased area by said second flag, as an object area to be~~ erased performs the pre-erasing control to erase a datum stored in the erasing block, for which the corresponding first flag indicates an invalid datum and the corresponding second flag indicates a datum which is not erased.

3. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 2,

wherein ~~said the~~ erasing table comprises an area having ~~said for storing the first flags and said the second flags.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 3,

wherein ~~said the~~ control circuit ~~alters, in the pre-erasing condition, the corresponding second flag to the condition indicating the erased area after completion of the~~

~~erasing process to the memory area as an erasing process~~  
~~objectselects one erasing block having a datum indicated to~~  
~~be invalid by the first flag and a datum indicated to be not~~  
~~erased by the second flag, and erases the datum stored in~~  
~~the one erasing block, and then, changes the second flag~~  
~~corresponding to the one erasing block to indicate an erased~~  
~~condition.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 4,

~~wherein said the control circuit performs the control~~  
~~to assign, to a new memory area for writing a new data to be~~  
~~updated, the memory area designated as a vacant area with~~  
~~said first flag and as an erased area with said second~~  
~~flagselects one erasing block having a datum indicated to be~~  
~~invalid by the first flag and a datum indicated to be erased~~  
~~by the second flag, and stores new datum to the one erasing~~  
~~block, and then changes the first flag corresponding to the~~  
~~one erasing block to indicate a valid condition.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 5,

~~wherein said the control circuit updates the~~  
~~corresponding first flag of memory area to which an old data~~  
~~is written to the condition to indicate a vacant area after~~  
~~the data is written into said new memory areachanges the~~  
~~first flag corresponding to another erasing block, in which~~  
~~a previous datum is stored, to an invalid condition and~~

changes the second flag corresponding to the another erasing block to a not erased condition.

7. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 6,

wherein ~~said the memory array area of nonvolatile memory~~ further comprises an address translation table indicating ~~the correspondence between a logical address and a physical address of memory area~~corresponding to the logical address, and

wherein ~~said the control circuit updates, after the data is written to said new memory area assigned on the basis of said first and second flags, said address translation table through correspondence between the physical address of memory area to which the data is written and the logical address before the update of the eorresponding first flag to the condition to indicate a vacant are~~changes the physical address from the another erasing block, in which the pervious datum had been stored, to the one erasing block, in which the new datum has been stored, after storing the new datum to the one erasing block and before changing the first flag corresponding to the another erasing block to the invalid condition.

8. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 1,

wherein ~~said the~~ control circuit executes ~~said the~~ pre-erasing control in response to the power-on of the memory card.

9. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 1, further comprising a cipher arithmetic processing circuit,

wherein ~~said the~~ control circuit executes ~~said the~~ pre-erasing control in parallel to the cipher arithmetic process executed with ~~said the~~ cipher arithmetic processing circuit in response to a predetermined security command.

10. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 1,

wherein ~~said the~~ control circuit executes ~~said the~~ pre-erasing control in response to a predetermined exclusive command.

11. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 1,

wherein ~~said the~~ control circuit starts ~~said the~~ pre-erasing control in response to the completion of a command process.

12. (Currently Amended) The memory card according to claim 11,

wherein when an instruction by another command is issued before or after the start of the erasing operation by ~~said the~~ pre-erasing control, the process of the relevant command is executed preferentially.

Claims 13 - 20 (cancelled)

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